AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following is a complete listing of revised claims with a status identifier in parenthesis.

Listing of the claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling messages in a communication system, comprising the steps of:

receiving a message blocking request from a first network component at a second network component, the message blocking request identifying a third network component, and wherein the message blocking request specifies a duration of a blocking period; and

preventing messages from being communicated from the third network component to the first network component if the second network component accepts the message blocking request based on an evaluation of the communication system.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of preventing is performed at the second network component.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of sending a message blocking command to the third network component.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the step of preventing is performed at the third network component.

5. (Canceled).

6. (Original). The method of claim 1, wherein the message blocking request specifies at least one acceptance interval during a blocking period, the acceptance interval being a period during which at least one message may be communicated from the third network component to the first network component.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the message blocking request specifies an action to be taken by the third network element instead of communicating a message from the third network component to the first network component.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the second network component may modify the action specified in the message blocking request.

9. (Previously Presented) A method for controlling messages in a communication system, comprising the steps of:

receiving a message blocking request from a first mobile switching center (MSC) at a system control function component (SCF), the message blocking request identifying a second MSC; and

preventing messages from being communicated from the second MSC to the first MSC.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the step of preventing is performed at the SCF.

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11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of sending a message blocking command to the second MSC.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of preventing is performed at the second MSC.

13. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the message blocking request specifies a duration of a blocking period.

14. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the message blocking request specifies at least one acceptance interval during a blocking period, the acceptance interval being a period during which at least one message may be communicated from the second MSC to the first MSC.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the message blocking request specifies an action to be taken by the second MSC instead of communicating a message from the second MSC to the first MSC.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the SCF may modify the action specified in the message blocking request.

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17.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 7, wherein the action includes communicating the message from the third network component to a specified alternate destination.

18.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 15, wherein the action includes communicating the message from the second MSC to a specified alternate destination.

19. (New)   A method for controlling messages in a communication system, comprising the steps of:

   receiving a message blocking request from a first network component at a second network component, the message blocking request identifying a third network component; and

   preventing messages from being communicated from the third network component to the first network component if the second network component accepts the message blocking request based on an effect on the communication system that may result from the preventing of the messages.

20. (New)   A method for controlling messages in a communication system, comprising the steps of:

   receiving a message blocking request from a first network component at a second network component, the message blocking request identifying a third network component;

   sending a message blocking command to the third network component based on load characteristics of the second network component.

21. (New) The method of claim 20 further comprising:

preventing messages from being communicated from the third network component to the

first network component if the third network component accepts the message blocking request

22. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of preventing is performed at the

third network component.

23. (New) A method for controlling messages in a communication system, comprising

the steps of:

receiving a message blocking request from a first network component at a second

network component, the message blocking request identifying a third network component;

sending a message blocking command to the third network component; and

preventing messages from being communicated from the third network component to the

first network component if the second network component accepts the message blocking request

based on an evaluation of the communication system.

24. (New) A method for controlling messages in a communication system, comprising

the steps of:

receiving a message blocking request from a first network component at a second

network component, the message blocking request identifying a third network component, and

wherein the message blocking request specifies at least one acceptance interval during a blocking

period, the acceptance interval being a period during which at least one message may be

communicated from the third network component to the first network component; and

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preventing messages from being communicated from the third network component to the first network component if the second network component accepts the message blocking request based on an evaluation of the communication system;

25. (New) A method for controlling messages in a communication system, comprising the steps of:

receiving a message blocking request from a first network component at a second network component, the message blocking request identifying a third network component, and wherein the message blocking request specifies an action to be taken by the third network element instead of communicating a message from the third network component to the first network component; and

preventing messages from being communicated from the third network component to the first network component if the second network component accepts the message blocking request based on an evaluation of the communication system.

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